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ABSTRACT

New York's Division of Substance Abuse Services conducted a major survey in 1989-1990 of students in grades five through twelve: past surveys of the Division had included only students in seventh through twelfth grades. Students in the fifth and sixth grades answered a separate, self-administered questionnaire, which included questions about the extent of exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs. This report presents the findings for these younger students. The report's first section focuses on the youngsters' own substance use and exposure to substance use on the part of others. Overall, fifth- and sixth-grade students show low rates of substance use. Nevertheless, the study finds that many youngsters live in environments where their close friends use drugs, where they have been offered a variety of substances, and where they have witnessed others using illicit substances. Most dramatically, more than half of fifth and sixth grade students in New York City have seen "in real life" the use of some illicit substance, such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin. Section 2 focuses on the lines of communication to children that may have implications for the prevention of substance use. The findings document the special role played by parents and school personnel for these youngsters. Ten tables summarize statistical findings. (RJM)

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ED 373 292

DRUG AND ALCOHOL FINDINGS:

New York State Students in Fifth and Sixth Grades

New York State Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services

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Drug And Alcohol Findings:
New York State Students in Fifth and Sixth Grades

January 1993

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DRUG AND ALCOHOL FINDINGS:
NEW YORK STATE STUDENTS IN FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

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DRUG AND ALCOHOL FINDINGS:
NEW YORK STATE STUDENTS IN FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the winter of 1989-1990, the then-Division of Substance Abuse Services (DSAS) conducted a major survey of New York State students in grades five through 12. Fifth and sixth graders were included for the first time. The past surveys conducted by the Division had included only students in grades seven through 12. A separate, self-administered questionnaire was designed for students in fifth and sixth grades which included many questions about the extent of exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs. The report that follows presents findings for these younger students, most of whom are 10 and 11 years of age.

The first section of the report focuses on the youngsters' own substance use and exposure to substance use on the part of others. Overall, fifth and sixth grade students show very low rates of substance use. Nevertheless, the survey finds that many youngsters live in environments where their close friends use, where they have been offered a variety of substances, and where they have actually witnessed others using illicit substances. Most dramatically, more than half of fifth and sixth grade students in New York City have seen "in real life" the use of some illicit substance, such as marijuana, cocaine, and heroin.

The second section of the report focuses on the influences and lines of communication to children that may have implications for the prevention of substance use. The findings document the special role played by parents and school personnel for these youngsters.

The major findings follow.

SUBSTANCE USE AND EXPOSURE TO USE

At least one-third of fifth and sixth grade students have already had a drink of alcohol--not just a sip or taste--or smoked at least one cigarette. At least two percent have already tried marijuana or inhalants (e.g., glue/sprays or "laughing gas").

- Although differences are not great, fifth and sixth graders in the Northeastern region of New York tend to show the highest rates of use in the state, while students in the Southern Tier region show the lowest rates of use.

- Sixth grade students are much more likely than fifth graders to have used alcohol and smoked cigarettes. Fifth graders are almost as likely as sixth graders to have used illicit substances, although rates are very low.

- White, black, and Hispanic students are much more likely than Asian-American students to have used alcohol and cigarettes. Rates of use of illicit substances are similar among the several ethnic groups of students.

- Boys tend to show higher rates of use than girls for the use of alcohol and cigarettes, but very similar rates for the use of illicit substances.

Students' exposure to substance use as a result of use by close friends, witnessing actual episodes of use, and being offered substances usually far exceeds students' own use.

- Fifth and sixth grade students in New York City are at least twice as likely as students in other regions to have seen the actual use of cocaine -- especially crack -- and the use of heroin.

- Fifth graders are almost as likely as sixth graders to have been exposed to illicit substance use by others.

- Black and Hispanic youngsters are much more likely to have seen the use of illicit substances than their white and Asian counterparts.

- Girls are almost as likely as boys to have witnessed the use of illicit substances. About one in five youngsters -- regardless of gender -- have witnessed the use of crack.

INFLUENCES AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Most fifth and sixth graders perceive that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer (63 percent of students) and using marijuana (75 percent). However, some variation among students does exist:

- Relatively speaking, fifth and sixth graders in the Southern Tier region are most likely to report their parents' disapproval, while youngsters in New York City are least likely.

- Sixth graders perceive a clearer message of disapproval from their parents than fifth graders.

- A higher proportion of white students report that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer and using marijuana than black, Hispanic, and Asian students.

- Girls are more likely than boys to perceive their parents' disapproval.

About half or more of the fifth and sixth graders indicate that they have received information on alcohol and other drugs from at least one school source since school began in September. Overall, health classes and assembly programs are the major sources of information, followed by drug counselors. Interestingly, drug counselors provide the modal source of information for students in New York City, and consequently for black, Hispanic, and Asian students who predominate in the city.

Where would students go if they were using alcohol or other drugs so much that they needed help? The major source of help identified by fifth and sixth graders was their parents (74 percent of students). A brother or sister was least likely to be chosen (44 percent). Although parents remain the most preferred, some variations exist among the youngsters:

- Fifth and sixth grade students in New York City were more likely to opt for a school program or counselor than in any other region in the state.

- Sixth graders are more likely than fifth graders to prefer friends and less likely to prefer parents as sources of help.

- Hispanic and Asian students are more likely than white and black students to identify sources of help and to prefer parents and school counselors as specific sources.

- Girls are more likely than boys to indicate a school counselor and friends as resources for help.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL FINDINGS:
NEW YORK STATE STUDENTS IN FIFTH AND SIXTH GRADES

INTRODUCTION

Periodically, the Bureau of Applied Studies of the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) conducts a major survey of substance use among students in public and private schools throughout the state. In the winter of 1989-1990, the Bureau conducted its most recent survey, which sampled an especially large segment of the youthful population. Students in grades seven through 12 usually constitute the survey sample. This time the study included fifth and sixth graders as well, since findings from earlier school surveys suggested that many students began using drugs before entering the seventh grade. A sample of 10,656 fifth and sixth graders was included in the study, representing approximately one-half million students in these grades in public and private schools throughout the state. This report describes findings for these younger students, most of whom are 10 and 11 years of age.

Methodologically, a self-administered questionnaire was designed specifically for fifth and sixth graders. The instrument maintained students' anonymity, and was available in both English and Spanish. Specific questions tapped the use of and exposure to alcohol, tobacco, and a variety of illicit substances. The report that follows describes the study's major findings and highlights by region, grade, ethnicity, and gender. The first section focuses on the youngsters' own substance use and exposure to substance use on the part of others. The second section focuses on the important lines of communication to the children.

SUBSTANCE USE AND EXPOSURE TO USE

Overall, fifth and sixth graders show very low rates of substance use. Nevertheless, it becomes evident from the survey's findings that many youngsters live in environments where their close friends use, where they have been offered a variety of substances, and where they have actually witnessed others using illicit substances. The sections that follow discuss use rates among students and student exposure to substance use.

Substance Use

Of the substances queried by the survey, those most frequently used were alcohol and, to a lesser extent, cigarettes. Nearly one-third (31 percent or 131,000) of the students in grades five and six reported that they had had a drink of alcohol in their lifetime --"not just a sip or taste"-- and 15 percent or 62,000 students reported that they have smoked cigarettes. Regarding use of specific alcoholic beverages, wine or wine coolers were the most popular, followed closely by beer. Over one-quarter (28 percent

or 113,000) of the students reported that they had had wine or wine cooler, while one-quarter (101,000) reported that they had had beer in their lifetime. The number of students who reported that they had had a drink of liquor in their lifetime was much lower (12 percent or 49,000).

The rate of use of illicit substances was, as one would expect, quite low when compared to licit substances such as alcohol and cigarettes. Some illicit substances, however, were more prominently reported than others. The rates of use of marijuana (two percent or 7,000) and inhalants (also two percent), while extremely low in absolute terms, were nonetheless approximately twice as high as the rates reported for other illicit substances. In addition to lifetime drug use, the survey also asked about recent (in the past six months) and current (in the past 30 days) use. Given the low rates of use in this population, the analysis of findings on substance use will be restricted to lifetime use. Table 1, however, presents substance use findings for each time period.

Substance Use of Close Friends

As noted in the introduction, the survey asked about the extent of students' exposure to substance use as well as the extent to which students perceived that their friends engaged in substance use. The value of exploring these factors is that both exposure to substance use and perceptions surrounding such usage may influence one's own propensity to use substances. Thus, three facets of exposure were queried:

- substance use of close friends;
- witnessing actual episodes of use; and
- being offered licit and illicit substances.

The findings regarding substance use of close friends, as expected, parallelled findings regarding students' own usage, but almost consistently exceeded students' use. The substances most prominently reported by students as being used by close friends were cigarettes (28 percent or 117,000) and alcohol (23 percent or 94,000). Regarding close friends' use of illicit drugs, marijuana was the most frequently reported substance (seven percent or 27,000), followed by the use of inhalants, and some form of cocaine (both at four percent).

Although the proportion of students reporting use of specific substances by close friends usually exceeded the proportion of students who reported that they had actually used these substances, alcohol use was an exception. While only 23 percent of students reported that their close friends used alcohol, 31 percent reported that they themselves had actually had a drink of alcohol in their lifetime. Figure 1 shows the relationship between students' own use and the use of close friends. It should be noted that some

discrepancies may be accounted for by the fact that respondents always knew about their own use but may not have known about their friends' use. In addition, a student may have many close friends and these may also be the close friends of other respondents.

Students' Exposure to Episodes of Actual Use

In addition to questions on students' perceptions of friends' substance use, the survey also included questions on students' exposure to episodes of actual use. Students were asked about instances of actual use "in real life (not just on TV or in movies)" and being offered substances. In many instances, the findings were particularly dramatic.

Regarding the extent to which students witnessed instances of actual use of illicit substances, marijuana was the most frequently reported substance (42 percent or 174,000), followed by the use of cocaine in any form (27 percent or 113,000), crack or freebase (20 percent or 79,000), and, most unexpectedly, heroin (13 percent or 55,000). Data on ever seeing alcohol and cigarettes are not presented since these are legal substances that are widely used in the adult population.

Interestingly, instances of inhalant use (glue and "laughing gas" or nitrous oxide), while more widespread than the use of cocaine, crack, or heroin within this population, were, nonetheless, less likely to have been witnessed by students. Instances of glue sniffing were witnessed by 11 percent or 44,000 students and instances of the use of nitrous oxide were witnessed by six percent or 25,000 students (see Table 2).

Students Being Offered Licit and Illicit Substances

Regarding the extent to which students were offered both licit and illicit substances, alcohol and cigarettes were the most frequently reported. Nearly one-quarter (24 percent) of the students reported being offered each of these substances. As far as illicit substances are concerned, marijuana was the most frequently offered substance (seven percent or 30,000), followed by cocaine in any form (five percent or 19,000).

Table 2 presents for many of the substances a comparison of findings for "ever seen used," "ever offered," and "ever used." As expected, the likelihood of having ever seen a particular substance used is considerably greater than having been offered the substance, which is, in turn, usually greater than the students' use of the substance. Findings for having been offered alcohol, however, remain an exception. As with use of alcohol by close friends, the proportion and number of students who reported having been offered alcohol (24 percent or 99,000) was exceeded by the proportion and number of students who reported having had a drink of alcohol (31 percent or 131,000). One explanation may be that for some students, the early use of alcohol may occur on a solitary basis.

Two other findings are also noteworthy. First, the number of students who reported that they were offered cocaine in any form exceeded the number who reported being offered glue (three percent or 13,000). Second, the number of students who reported that they were offered crack (three percent or 12,000 students) was virtually the same as the number who were offered glue and, at the same time, somewhat higher than the number who were offered "laughing gas" or nitrous oxide (two percent or 7,000). Yet Table 2 suggests that, despite this higher level of exposure, students were still more likely to have used inhalants than cocaine. This may be because of the higher level of danger and also social stigma that is attached to cocaine use vis-a-vis inhalant use for this age group.

Detailed Findings

These statewide findings offer insight into the experience of youngsters with drugs and alcohol from several vantage points. Often, however, the statewide average masks the special experiences of subgroups in the population by virtue of geographic and demographic differences. Consequently, we turn now to another look at these findings by geographic region of the State, by specific grade, by ethnicity, and by gender.

Regional Differences

The survey sampled broadly throughout New York State so that findings for these young students may be presented for each of the eight former DSAS or Health Service Areas in the state. A map of the state showing the regions appears on the following page.

As described earlier, rates of substance use for fifth and sixth graders are generally low. Nevertheless, some differences among regions do appear. Fifth and sixth graders in the Northeastern New York region (Region 5) tend to show the highest rates of use, while their counterparts in the Southern Tier region (Region 4) show the lowest rates of use. The six remaining regions show rates very close to the state average.

When the extent of students' exposure to substance use is considered, several patterns emerge. Substance use among close friends continues to parallel and exceed students' own use except for alcohol use where students' own use exceeds that of close friends. Thus, students in the Southern Tier are least likely and students in the Northeastern New York region are most likely to report having close friends who are substance users. Students in the remaining regions are closer to the state average.

Looking at other influences on youngsters --especially seeing substance use in real life and being offered drugs and alcohol-- reveals some surprising relationships. As might be expected, the youngsters in the Southern Tier region are least likely to have seen the use of or to have been offered most of the substances queried. On the other hand, fifth and sixth graders in the Northeastern New York region have had rates of being offered substances that are close to the state average, and rates of seeing substance use that are considerably lower than the state average.

New York State

Region 1	Western New York
Region 2	Finger Lakes
Region 3	Central New York
Region 4	Southern Tier
Region 5	Northeastern New York
Region 6	Hudson Valley
Region 7	New York City
Region 8	Nassau/Suffolk

Perhaps the most alarming findings were found in New York City, where the highest proportion of students have seen the use of illicit substances. Of fifth and sixth graders attending school in New York City, 53 percent have seen "in real life" people using marijuana; 45 percent using some form of cocaine; 36 percent using crack, specifically; and 22 percent using heroin. Interestingly, the likelihood of actually being offered these drugs in New York City is not as dramatic and is close to the state average. As discussed earlier, use rates for these young New York City students are also close to the state average (see Table 3). Since there is sufficient variability in experience from region to region, the following briefly summarizes findings for fifth and sixth grade students by region.

- Students in the Western New York region (Region 1) are somewhat more exposed to alcohol and cigarettes than other fifth and sixth graders in the state, and have use rates that are slightly higher than the statewide average. Regarding illicit substances, these youngsters report less exposure and generally lower rates of use than the statewide average.

- Students in the Finger Lakes region (Region 2) are somewhat less likely to have been offered or to have used alcohol, but are more likely to have been offered or used cigarettes. With regard to illicit substances, these youngsters have had somewhat higher exposure to cocaine and heroin than other youngsters in the Western part of New York.

- Students in the Central New York region (Region 3) have generally had experiences close to the state average in exposure and use of licit and illicit substances queried. Marijuana use is slightly higher among these students than students in nearby regions.

- Students in the Southern Tier region (Region 4) have had the lowest exposure to both licit and illicit substances, and have the lowest substance use rates among fifth and sixth graders.

- Students in the Northeastern New York region (Region 5) have near average rates of exposure, but have the highest rates of use for alcohol, cigarettes, and cocaine among fifth and sixth graders statewide.

- Students in the Hudson Valley region (Region 6) show rates of exposure to illicit substances that are dramatically higher than students upstate, but lower than students in New York City. Use rates, however, almost identically resemble the state average.

- Students in fifth and sixth grades in New York City (Region 7) are at least twice as likely as other youngsters in the State to have seen the actual use of cocaine --especially crack-- and the use of heroin. Use rates for students in New York City, however, are close to average for both licit and illicit substances.

- Students in the Nassau-Suffolk region (Region 8) are less likely to have been exposed to drugs or alcohol than fifth and sixth graders downstate, and have use rates that are generally lower than the state average.

Grade Differences

Differences between fifth and sixth graders are sometimes sizable and sometimes slight. The use of and exposure to alcohol and cigarettes show dramatic differences between fifth and sixth graders. Sixth graders are considerably more likely than fifth graders to use these substances, to have close friends who use, and to have had these substances offered to them (see Table 4).

When it comes to experience with illicit substances, however, differences are not quite so dramatic. Fifth graders are almost as likely as sixth graders to have been exposed to use by others and to have used themselves. For instance, as Table 4 indicates, 26 percent of fifth graders and 27 percent of sixth graders report having actually seen cocaine being used; five percent of fifth graders as well as sixth graders have been offered cocaine in some form; and less than 0.5 percent of fifth graders and one percent of sixth graders have used cocaine in their lifetime.

Ethnic Differences

On the questionnaire, the majority of students identified themselves as white, black, Hispanic, or Asian-American. A comparison of findings for these students did reveal some important differences.

First, the use of alcoholic beverages and cigarettes showed dramatic differences between white, black, and Hispanic youngsters on the one hand and Asians on the other. Proportionately more than twice as many black, white, and Hispanic youngsters as Asian youngsters reported ever using alcohol or cigarettes. For example, 38 percent of blacks, 34 percent of Hispanics, and 29 percent of whites ever used any alcohol, compared to only 14 percent of Asians.

In comparing use rates of illicit substances by ethnicity, however, the findings were very similar. For the use of inhalants, for instance, the rates are virtually the same (see Table 5).

A major ethnic difference emerges when we look at exposure to the use of illicit substances, particularly having "ever seen" the use of these substances. Black and Hispanic youngsters are much more likely to have seen the use of illicit substances than their white and Asian counterparts. For instance, 54 percent of fifth and sixth graders who are black and 48 percent of those who are Hispanic have seen cocaine being used, compared to 15 percent of white and 14 percent of Asian youngsters. Table 5 shows similar findings for marijuana, crack, and heroin. Regional location in the state may contribute to these differences.

Gender Differences

Among fifth and sixth grade students, boys tend to have higher rates of use than girls for the most popular substances, alcohol and cigarettes, but very similar rates for the other substances included in the survey. For example, as seen in Table 6, 37 percent of fifth and sixth grade males have used alcohol, compared to 25 percent of fifth and sixth grade females. Use rates of marijuana, crack, any form of cocaine, and inhalants, however, are similar for males and females.

Regarding other aspects of exposure, such as having actually seen the substance used and having been offered the substance, boys are generally more likely than girls to have had these experiences. The differences, however, become smaller with illicit substances. Experience with any form of cocaine and with crack, specifically, is almost identical: 28 percent of males and 26 percent of females have seen the use of some form of cocaine; 20 percent of males and 19 percent of females have seen the use of crack (see Table 6).

INFLUENCES AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Although these young students have had little experience in using the substances queried, they surely have been exposed to the use of these substances on the part of others. Consequently, it is important to understand additional influences on these young students that may be useful in the prevention of substance use. The questionnaire probed a variety of links to the students, including the perception of parental attitudes, recent sources of information in school, and students' preferences for seeking help for a problem with alcohol or other drugs.

Parental Attitudes Regarding Substance Use

As a way of discerning parental attitudes regarding substance use, students were asked two questions. One question asked how students' parents felt about children their age drinking beer; the second question asked how their parents felt about children their age using marijuana. Generally, students' perceptions regarding parental attitudes on marijuana use were clearer than those regarding parental attitudes on alcohol use. While slightly over one-third of the students (35 percent or 138,000) either did not know how their parents felt regarding alcohol use or felt that they neither approved nor disapproved, less than one-quarter of the students (22 percent or 87,000) made similar claims about parental attitudes regarding marijuana use.

Moreover, students were more likely to report that their parents disapproved of marijuana use. While parental disapproval of beer drinking was reported by 63 percent (252,000) of students, parental disapproval of marijuana smoking was reported by 75 percent (305,000, see Figure 2).

School Sources of Information

The students were asked to identify school sources for drug or alcohol information that they may have received "since school began in September." Several school sources were listed, and students were asked to indicate "No" or "Yes" for each choice (see Figure 3).

"Health class" and "assembly program" were the most frequently reported sources of information (40 percent for each). The second most frequently identified was "drug counselor" (36 percent or 140,000), followed by "science class" (27 percent or 106,000), "guidance counselor" (19 percent or 72,000), and, finally, "social science class" (16 percent or 62,000). While the predominance of health class in disseminating information is not very surprising, the finding that over one-third of students have received information from drug counselors is interesting for two reasons. First, it may be an indication of the widespread use of school-based prevention services. Second, it is an illustration of how drug abuse prevention counseling provides information as well as intervention.

Student Preferences for Help

Finally, the survey included a question on where students would go if they "were using drugs or alcohol so much" that they needed help (see Figure 4). The question provided students with a list of sources of help to respond "Yes" or "No" to as many sources as they wanted. The answers give some clue to the resources that young students value.

Clearly, the most popular source of help chosen by students was "parents" (74 percent or 291,000), while the least popular was "your brother or sister" (44 percent or 168,000). "Friends" was only slightly more popular than siblings as a source of help (47 percent or 179,000). "Program or counselor in school," chosen by 54 percent (211,000) of students as a source of help, was virtually tied with "program or counselor outside of school" (53 percent or 206,000). Furthermore, both choices were less likely to be selected as sources of assistance than either "medical doctor" (59 percent or 228,000) or "another person," such as grandparents, other relative, or clergyman (57 percent or 219,000 students). These findings apparently suggest that fifth and sixth grade students tend to turn to particular adults outside the school setting, and that parents hold a very special trust in this regard.

Detailed Findings

The statewide findings presented above give us an overview of the possible lines of communication to these young students. We look now at differences that may be related to students' regional location, specific grade, ethnicity, and gender.

Regional Differences

Of the influences on students, parents and school are of particular importance throughout the state. Nevertheless, some variations exist. For instance, a larger proportion of fifth and six graders in the Southern Tier region (Region 4) than in any other region have received a clear message that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer (74 percent of students) and using marijuana (85 percent). Students in New York City show the lowest proportion of students who perceive their parents' disapproval of drinking beer (59 percent) and using marijuana (71 percent). Findings for other regions are much closer to the state average (see Table 7).

Even the recent school sources of information for drugs and alcohol identified by the youngsters vary from region to region. For instance, "health class" is a major source of information, reported by 83 percent of students in the Southern Tier region, but only 33 percent of New York City's fifth and sixth graders; the statewide average is 40 percent. On the other hand, the "drug counselor" is the major source of information for students in New York City (48 percent), but hardly a source of information for students in the Southern Tier region (13 percent); statewide, 36 percent of the students identified this source. Of course, all resources are not equally available in all places throughout the state.

Finally, the choices identified by students for seeking help show "parents" as the overwhelming major choice, with little variability. Nevertheless, the highest proportion (78 percent) of students who opted for their parents were from the Southern Tier region, compared to the lowest proportion (69 percent), who were from the Northeastern New York region.

School programs and personnel are not prominently chosen by students, except in New York City. Here, 60 percent of fifth and sixth graders indicated a school program or counselor as a preference for seeking help with a drug or alcohol problem, compared with the state average of 54 percent.

In summary, parents and school have a unique opportunity to influence children at this stage of life. Although these resources are surely evident throughout the state, students in the Southern Tier region, show a relatively stronger influence of parents, and students in New York City show a relatively stronger influence of school personnel.

Grade Differences

Interesting differences emerge as youngsters grow older, even from one year to the next. First, sixth graders perceive a clearer message of disapproval from their parents than fifth graders regarding kids their age drinking beer (65 percent of sixth graders versus 60 percent of fifth graders) and using marijuana (79 percent versus 72 percent). As the children become older, parents may feel the need to make a firmer statement to children; younger children may not be thought to be at as much risk.

Of school sources of information identified by the students, fifth graders are somewhat more likely to receive information on drugs and alcohol from assembly programs and sixth graders are somewhat more likely to receive information in health class. As the children reach higher grades, health class may present more of an opportunity to discuss issues surrounding the use of drugs and alcohol.

What is particularly interesting is the difference in the preferences for help identified by youngsters about a year apart. Younger students are more likely than older students to prefer "parents" --77 percent of fifth graders versus 70 percent of sixth graders. Older students are more likely than younger students to prefer "friends" --52 percent of sixth graders versus 41 percent of fifth graders. Not surprisingly, as children grow older, "friends" assume a more important role as confidant. Nevertheless, at this stage in their lives, "parents" remain very important (see Table 8).

Ethnic Differences

Some differences by ethnicity are striking. First, white students are more likely than other students to report that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer (66 percent) and using marijuana (80 percent). Black, Hispanic, and Asian students report disapproval in virtually identical proportions. For instance, 57 percent of black students, 56 percent of Hispanic students, and 55 percent of Asian students report that their parents disapprove of beer drinking.

The recent school sources of information identified by the students may be more reflective of where in the State students live than their ethnicity. Black, Hispanic, and Asian students --who predominate in New York City-- are more likely to indicate "drug counselor" than other school sources. White students, on the other hand, are more likely to identify "health class" as the source of information.

Preferences for seeking help among children by ethnicity also reveal important differences. For instance, Asian children, followed by Hispanic children, indicate a willingness to select more choices than other children, with a very strong preference for "parents" and "school counselor." Black students, followed by white students, on the other hand, are somewhat less likely to indicate a choice for help. Parents, however, remain a very strong preference for both, with "school counselor" taking on prominence for black students and "friends" as important as "school counselor" for white students (see Table 9).

Gender Differences

Gender differences are not enormous but are consistent. For instance, girls are more likely than boys to indicate their parents' disapproval of kids their age drinking beer (64 percent of girls and 61 percent of boys) and using marijuana (78 percent versus 73 percent). Also, girls are more likely than boys to indicate a preference for seeking help with a drug or alcohol problem. Although "parents" are a very strong choice for

both girls (75 percent) and boys (73 percent) and show little difference, girls are more likely to indicate a "school counselor" (57 percent versus 51 percent) and "friends" (50 percent versus 43 percent) as resources.

Boys, on the other hand, are slightly but consistently more likely than girls to indicate recent school sources for drug or alcohol information. "Health class" is a major source for both boys and girls, but 41 percent of the males and 38 percent of the females indicate the source.

These findings may suggest that girls and boys are attuned to different influences. Also, parental and school influences may be directed somewhat differently for girls than for boys. In any case, there are slight but interesting differences in impact (see Table 10).

Table 1

Estimated Substance Use Among 427,000 Students
Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

Type of Substance[a]	Never Used		Lifetime Use (used at least once)		Recent Use (used in past six months)		Current Use (used in past 30 days)	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Marijuana	414,000	98	7,000	2	4,000	1	2,000	1
Cocaine (not crack)	419,000	99	3,000	1	1,000	*	1,000	*
Crack or Freebase	419,000	99	3,000	1	1,000	*	1,000	*
Any Cocaine	419,000	99	4,000	1	2,000	*	1,000	*
Inhalants	413,000	98	9,000	2	5,000	1	3,000	1
Pills[b]	418,000	99	3,000	1	2,000	*	1,000	*
Other Drugs	412,000	98	10,000	2	7,000	2	4,000	1
Cigarettes	356,000	85	62,000	15	31,000	7	16,000	4
Chewing Tobacco	403,000	96	17,000	4	6,000	1	3,000	1
Any Alcohol	293,000	69	131,000	31	56,000	13	33,000	8
Beer	308,000	75	101,000	25	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
Wine/Wine Cooler	295,000	72	113,000	28	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
Liquor	356,000	88	49,000	12	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)

Example of how to read the table: Among responding students, 7,000 or two percent have used marijuana at least once.

Note: The numbers reported in the table are low estimates since they do not include the nonrespondents.

[a]Inhalants such as glue/sprays or "laughing gas"; pills such as "ups," "downs," or sleeping pills.

[b]Refers to nonmedical use.

[c]Not asked.

*Less than 0.5%.

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FIGURE 1: SUBSTANCE USE BY CLOSE FRIENDS VS. STUDENTS' OWN LIFETIME SUBSTANCE USE AMONG 5TH AND 6TH GRADERS IN NEW YORK STATE, 1990

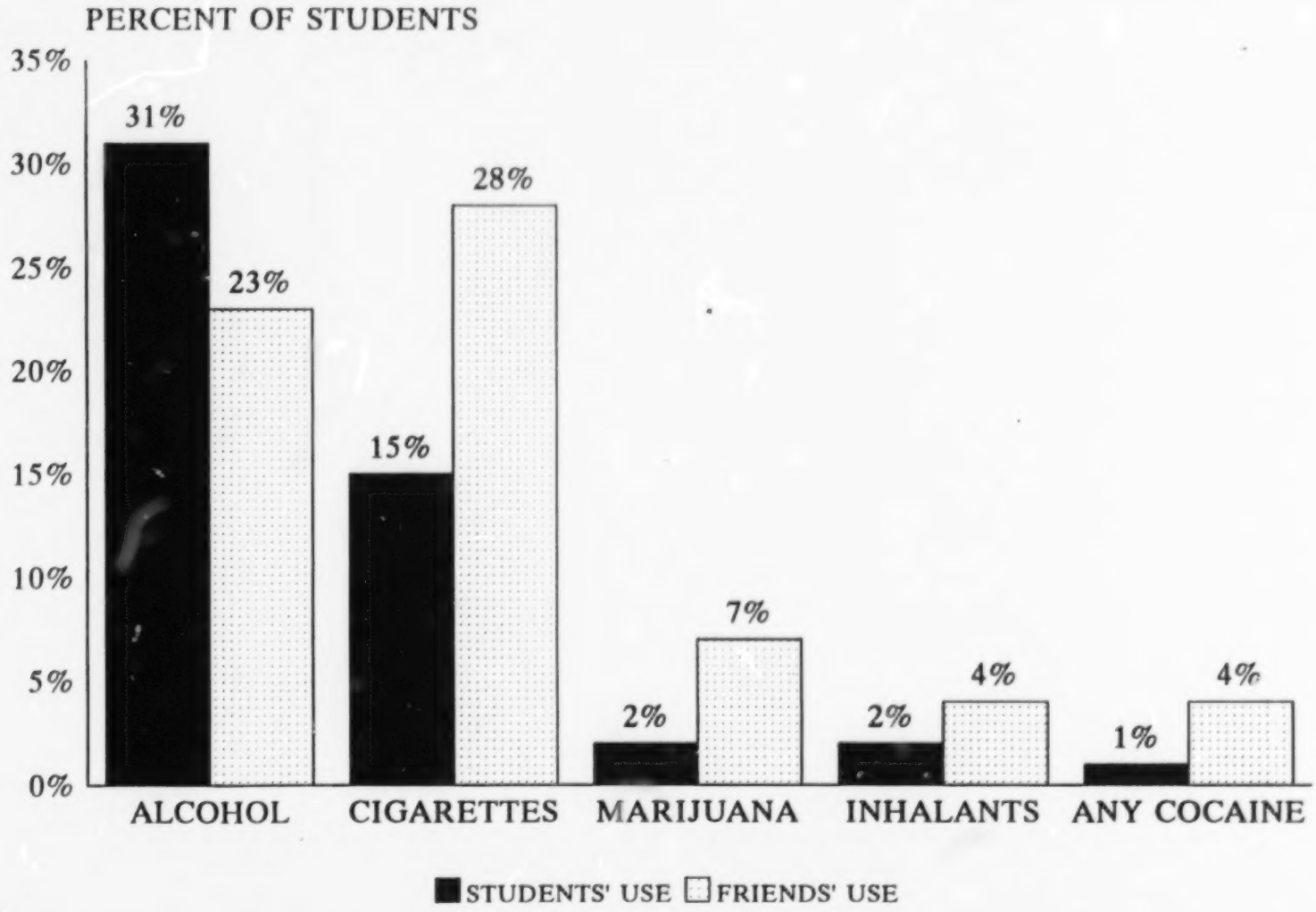

Table 2

Extent of Exposure to and Use of Selected Substances
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

Type of Substance	%	N
Alcohol[a]		
Ever Offered	24	99,000
Ever Used	31	131,000
Cigarettes[a]		
Ever Offered	24	100,000
Ever Used	15	62,000
Any Inhalants[b]		
Ever Seen	14	59,000
Ever Offered	4	17,000
Ever Used	2	9,000
Marijuana		
Ever Seen	42	174,000
Ever Offered	7	30,000
Ever Used	2	7,000
Crack		
Ever Seen	20	79,000
Ever Offered	3	12,000
Ever Used	1	3,000
Any Cocaine		
Ever Seen	27	113,000
Ever Offered	5	19,000
Ever Used	1	4,000
Heroin[c]		
Ever Seen	13	55,000
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS		427,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Among fifth and sixth graders, an estimated 42 percent have seen the use of marijuana "in real life (not just on TV or in movies)," seven percent have been offered marijuana, and two percent have actually used marijuana.

[a]Since alcohol and cigarettes are legal substances that are widely used, "Ever Seen" is not presented.

[b]Inhalants include glue, sprays, and "laughing gas."

[c]Questions specifically asking "Ever Offered" or "Ever Used" heroin were not included.

Table 3
Extent of Exposure to and Use of Selected Substances by Region
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

Type of Substance	Total	Western NY Region 1	Finger Lakes Region 2	Central NY Region 3	Southern Tier Region 4	Northeast NY Region 5	Hudson Valley Region 6	New York City Region 7	Nassau-Suffolk Region 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Alcohol[a]									
Ever Offered	24	27	22	23	17	24	22	25	21
Ever Used	31	32	27	28	24	36	30	33	28
Cigarettes[a]									
Ever Offered	24	31	27	25	20	32	25	21	23
Ever Used	15	17	17	14	8	21	15	14	14
Any Inhalants[b]									
Ever Seen	14	11	10	10	9	12	13	19	12
Ever Offered	4	3	3	4	4	4	6	4	3
Ever Used	2	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	2
Marijuana									
Ever Seen	42	33	32	30	24	32	41	53	35
Ever Offered	7	7	7	7	4	7	7	8	6
Ever Used	2	1	1	3	*	4	2	2	1
Crack									
Ever Seen	20	7	9	9	5	10	14	36	8
Ever Offered	3	1	2	2	1	3	2	5	2
Ever Used	1	*	1	*	*	1	*	1	*
Any Cocaine									
Ever Seen	27	14	15	13	8	16	23	45	14
Ever Offered	5	2	4	3	1	4	4	7	3
Ever Used	1	*	1	1	*	2	1	1	1
Heroin[c]									
Ever Seen	13	6	8	6	4	8	11	22	8
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS[d]	427,000	39,000	30,000	37,000	8,000	34,000	47,000	168,000	63,000

Example of how to read the table: Of fifth and sixth graders enrolled in public and private schools in New York City, an estimated 36 percent have seen the use of Crack or Freebase "in real life (not just on TV or in movies)," five percent have been offered, and one percent have actually used it.

[a]Since alcohol and cigarettes are legal substances that are widely used, "Ever Seen" is not presented.
[b]Inhalants include glue, sprays, and "laughing gas."
[c]Questions specifically asking "Ever Offered" or "Ever Used" heroin were not included.
[d]Due to rounding, numbers of students by region do not add exactly to the total.

*Less than 0.5%.

Note: Given that the sample sizes of the regions are smaller than the State as a whole, differences in rates between regions may appear to be greater than they actually are in the population.

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Table 4

Extent of Exposure to and Use of Selected Substances by Grade
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

Type of Substance	Total	5th Graders	6th Graders
	%	%	%
Alcohol[a]			
Ever Offered	24	19	28
Ever Used	31	25	37
Cigarettes[a]			
Ever Offered	24	19	30
Ever Used	15	10	20
Any Inhalants[b]			
Ever Seen	14	13	15
Ever Offered	4	4	5
Ever Used	2	1	3
Marijuana			
Ever Seen	42	40	44
Ever Offered	7	6	8
Ever Used	2	1	2
Crack			
Ever Seen	20	19	20
Ever Offered	3	3	3
Ever Used	1	*	1
Any Cocaine			
Ever Seen	27	26	27
Ever Offered	5	5	5
Ever Used	1	*	1
Heroin[c]			
Ever Seen	13	12	14
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	427,000	214,000	213,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Among fifth graders, an estimated 40 percent have seen the use of marijuana "in real life (not just on TV or in movies)," six percent have been offered marijuana, and one percent have actually used marijuana.

[a]Since alcohol and cigarettes are legal substances that are widely used, "Ever Seen" is not presented.

[b]Inhalants include glue, sprays, and "laughing gas."

[c]Questions specifically asking "Ever Offered" or "Ever Used" heroin were not included.

Table 5

Extent of Exposure to and Use of Selected Substances by Ethnicity
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

Type of Substance	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
	%	%	%	%	%
Alcohol[a]					
Ever Offered	24	22	29	30	14
Ever Used	31	29	38	34	14
Cigarettes[a]					
Ever Offered	24	25	25	25	13
Ever Used	15	15	15	16	8
Any Inhalants[b]					
Ever Seen	14	10	19	23	13
Ever Offered	4	4	5	5	2
Ever Used	2	2	2	2	2
Marijuana					
Ever Seen	42	33	59	59	28
Ever Offered	7	6	11	10	2
Ever Used	2	1	3	2	*
Crack					
Ever Seen	20	9	43	38	10
Ever Offered	3	2	7	5	*
Ever Used	1	*	1	1	*
Any Cocaine					
Ever Seen	27	15	54	48	14
Ever Offered	5	3	8	8	2
Ever Used	1	1	1	1	*
Heroin[c]					
Ever Seen	13	8	25	24	3
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS[d]	427,000	254,000	67,000	66,000	12,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Among fifth and sixth graders who are Hispanic, an estimated 59 percent have seen the use of marijuana "in real life (not just on TV or in movies)," 10 percent have been offered marijuana, and two percent have actually used marijuana.

[a]Since alcohol and cigarettes are legal substances that are widely used, "Ever Seen" is not presented.

[b]Inhalants include glue, sprays, and "laughing gas."

[c]Questions specifically asking "Ever Offered" or "Ever Used" heroin were not included.

[d]This table presents findings only for the four major ethnic groups among the students. The number of students presented by ethnic group are therefore less than the total.

*Less than 0.5 percent.

Table 6

Extent of Exposure to and Use of Selected Substances by Gender
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

Type of Substance	Total	Males	Females
	%	%	%
Alcohol[a]			
Ever Offered	24	28	20
Ever Used	31	37	25
Cigarettes[a]			
Ever Offered	24	28	21
Ever Used	15	17	13
Any Inhalants[b]			
Ever Seen	14	16	12
Ever Offered	4	6	3
Ever Used	2	3	2
Marijuana			
Ever Seen	42	43	40
Ever Offered	7	9	6
Ever Used	2	2	1
Crack			
Ever Seen	20	20	19
Ever Offered	3	4	2
Ever Used	1	1	*
Any Cocaine			
Ever Seen	27	28	26
Ever Offered	5	6	3
Ever Used	1	1	1
Heroin[c]			
Ever Seen	13	15	11
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS[d]	427,000	210,000	216,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Among fifth and sixth grade girls, an estimated 40 percent have seen the use of marijuana "in real life (not just on TV or in movies)," six percent have been offered marijuana, and one percent have actually used marijuana.

[a]Since alcohol and cigarettes are legal substances that are widely used, "Ever Seen" is not presented.

[b]Inhalants include glue, sprays, and "laughing gas."

[c]Questions specifically asking "Ever Offered" or "Ever Used" heroin were not included.

[d]Due to rounding, numbers of males and females do not add exactly to the total.

*Less than 0.5 percent.

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FIGURE 2: PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES AMONG 5TH AND 6TH GRADERS IN NEW YORK STATE, 1990

Q: HOW DO PARENTS FEEL ABOUT KIDS YOUR AGE.....

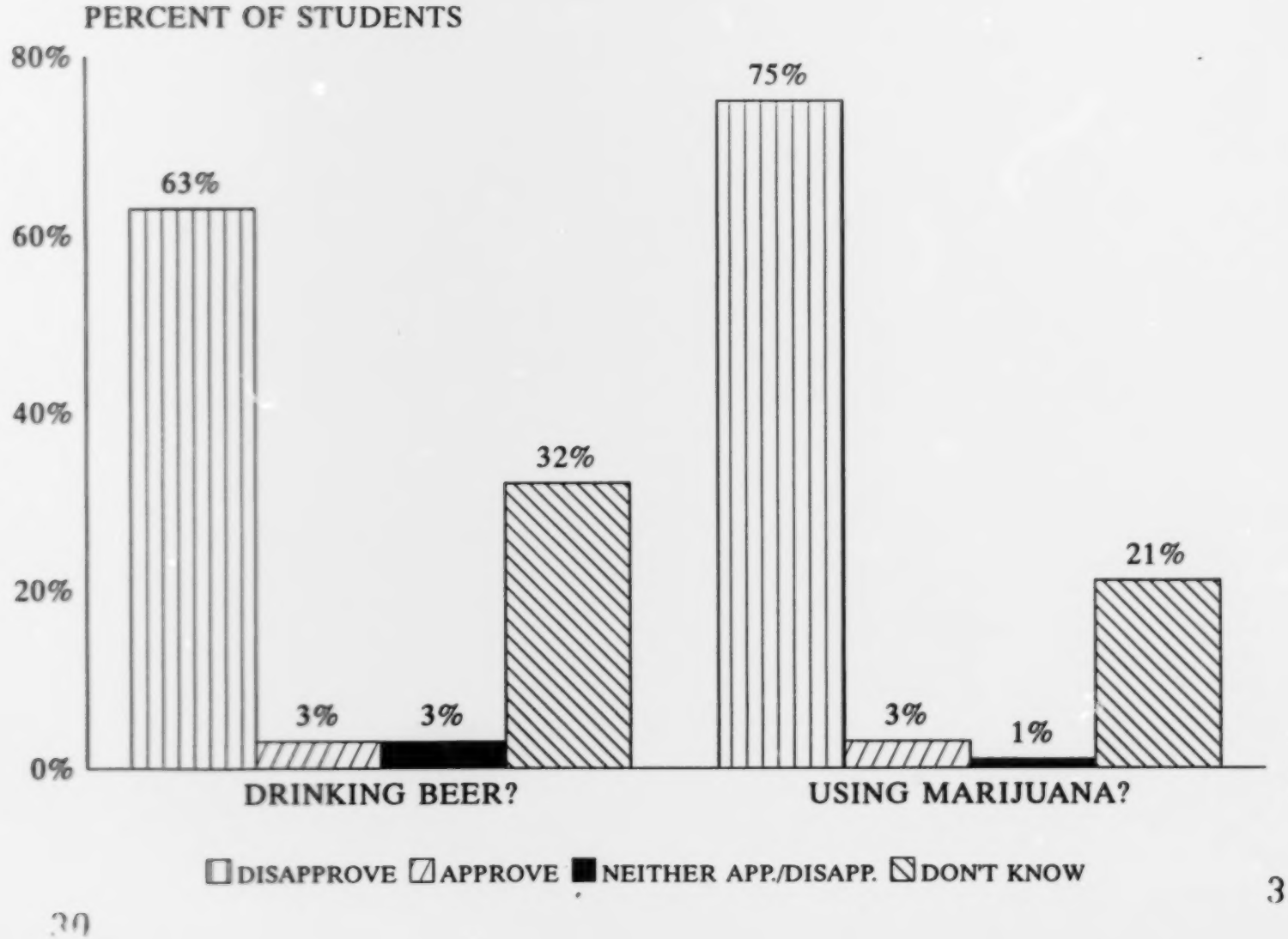


FIGURE 3: SOURCES OF INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL ON DRUGS OR ALCOHOL IDENTIFIED BY 5TH AND 6TH GRADERS IN NEW YORK STATE, 1990

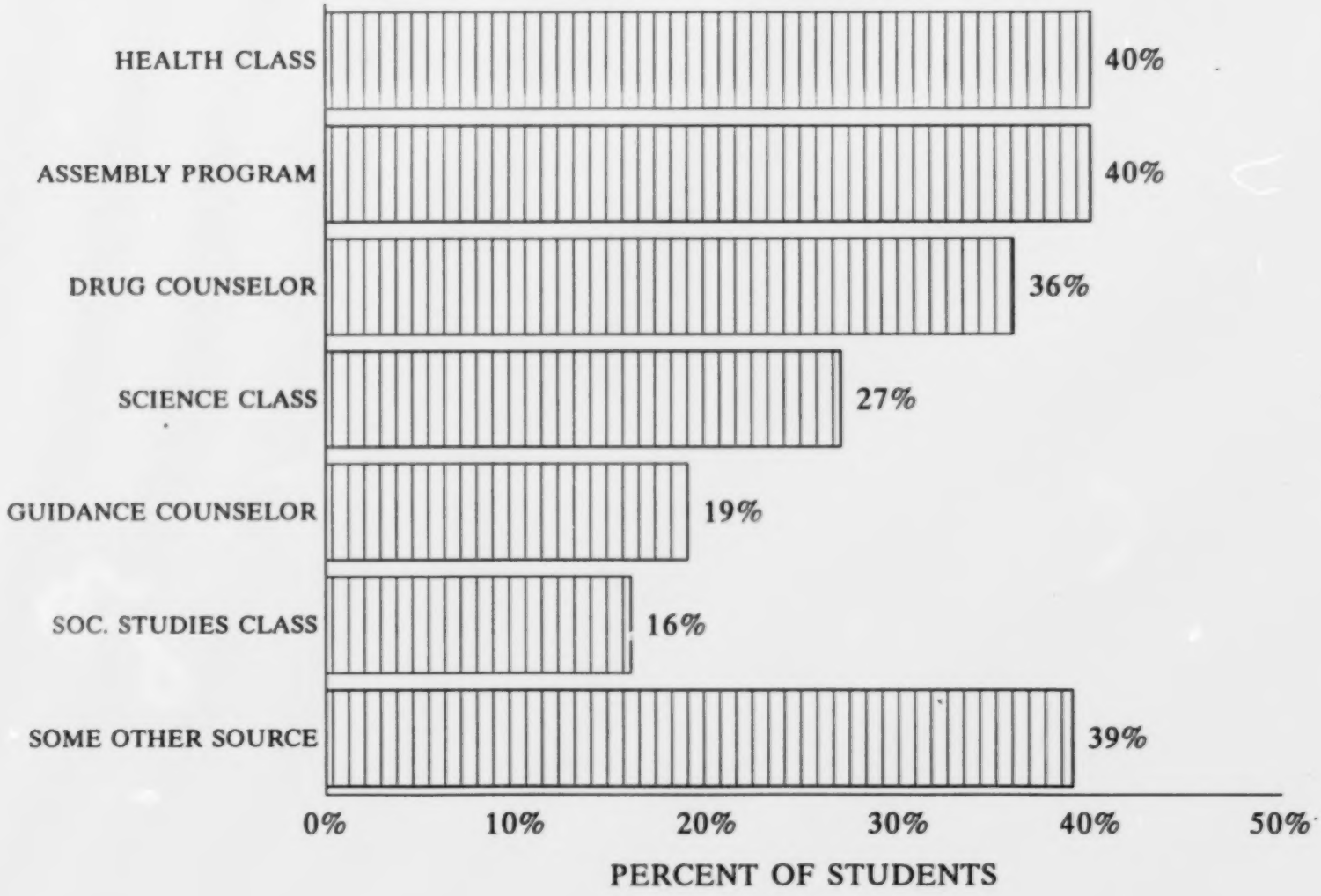
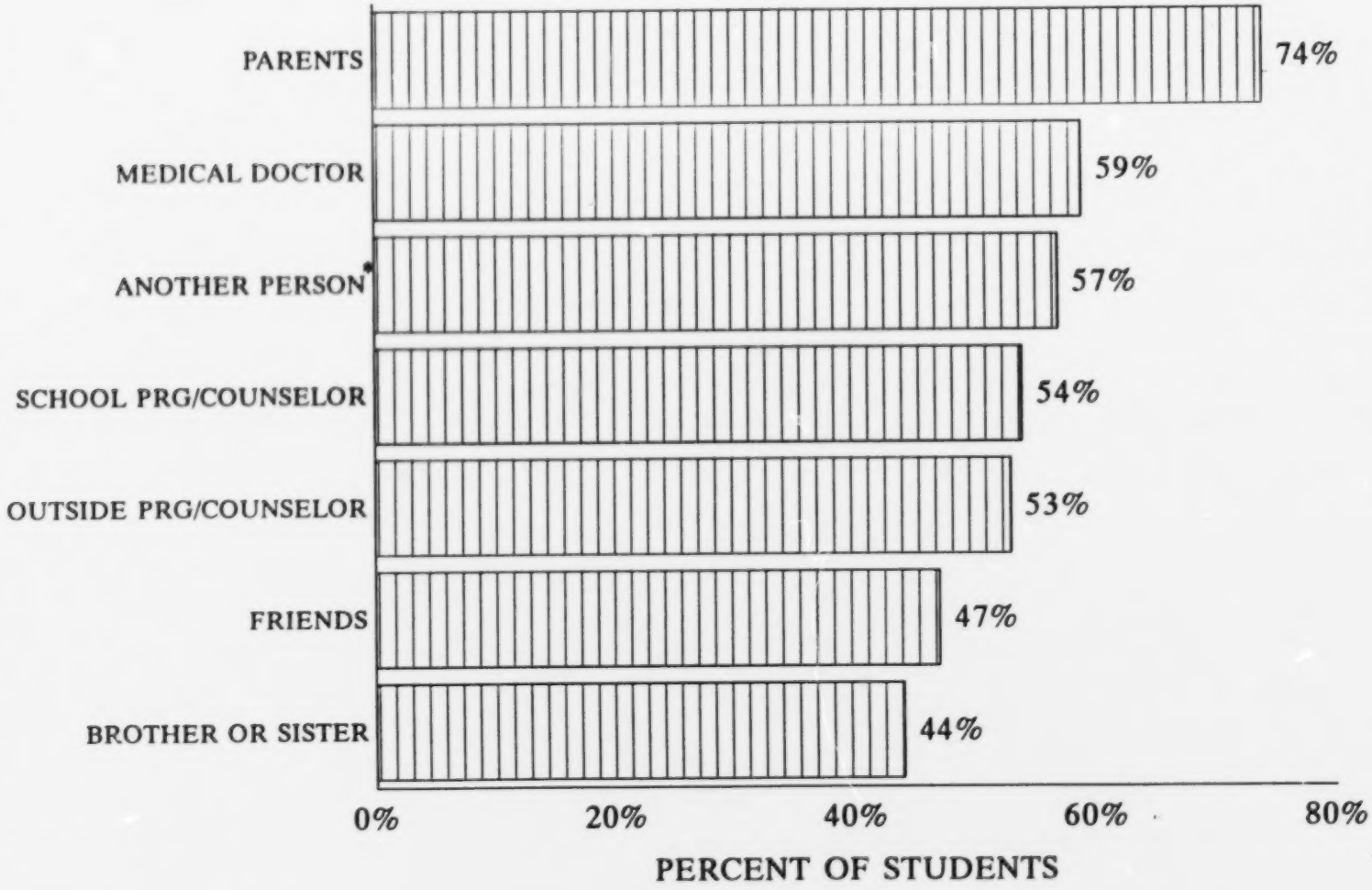


FIGURE 4: PREFERENCES FOR HELP WITH A DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEM AMONG 5TH AND 6TH GRADERS IN NEW YORK STATE, 1990



*SUCH AS GRANDPARENTS, OTHER RELATIVE, MINISTER, PRIEST, RABBI

Table 7

Selected Lines of Communication to Fifth and Sixth Graders by Region
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

	Total	Western NY Region 1	Finger Lakes Region 2	Central NY Region 3	Southern Tier Region 4	Northeast NY Region 5	Hudson Valley Region 6	New York City Region 7	Nassau-Suffolk Region 8
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Perceive Parent's Disapproval of Children:									
Drinking Beer	63	67	66	67	74	61	65	59	65
Using Marijuana	75	81	80	79	85	77	75	71	79
Recent School Source for Drug or Alcohol Information:									
Health Class	40	39	38	47	83	49	40	33	43
Assembly Program	40	49	47	42	28	33	49	38	31
Drug Counselor	36	20	32	31	13	29	26	48	33
Preference for Help with Drug or Alcohol Problem:									
Parents	74	73	74	74	78	69	73	74	75
School Counselor	54	45	55	50	44	57	48	60	49
Friends	47	49	52	46	53	56	49	42	46
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS*	427,000	39,000	30,000	37,000	8,000	34,000	47,000	168,000	63,000

Example of how to read the table: Among fifth and sixth graders enrolled in public and private schools in New York City, an estimated 59 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer, and an estimated 71 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age using marijuana.

*Due to rounding error, numbers of students by region do not add exactly to the total.

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Table 8

Selected Lines of Communication for Fifth and Sixth Graders by Specific Grade
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

	Total	5th Grade	6th Grade
	%	%	%
Perceive Parents' Disapproval of Children:			
Drinking Beer	63	60	65
Using Marijuana	75	72	79
Recent School Source for Drug or Alcohol Information:			
Health Class	40	39	40
Assembly Program	40	42	37
Drug Counselor	36	38	33
Preference for Help with Drug or Alcohol Problem:			
Parents	74	77	70
School Counselor	54	53	55
Friends	47	41	52
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	427,000	214,000	213,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Of fifth graders enrolled in public and private schools in New York State, an estimated 72 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age using marijuana. Of sixth graders enrolled in New York State, an estimated 79 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age using marijuana.

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Table 9

Selected Lines of Communication for Fifth and Sixth Graders by Ethnicity
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
	%	%	%	%	%
Perceive Parent's Disapproval of Children:					
Drinking Beer	63	66	57	56	55
Using Marijuana	75	80	69	66	67
Recent School Source for Drug or Alcohol Information:					
Health Class	40	41	36	38	30
Assembly Program	40	38	43	46	32
Drug Counselor	36	29	46	50	42
Preference for Help with Drug or Alcohol Problem:					
Parents	74	74	71	76	77
School Counselor	54	50	58	65	66
Friends	47	50	36	42	52
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS[a]	427,000	254,000	67,000	66,000	12,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Among fifth graders who are Hispanic, an estimated 56 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer, and an estimated 66 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age using marijuana.

[a]This table presents findings only for the four major ethnic groups among the students. The number of students presented by ethnic group are therefore less than the total.

Table 10

Selected Lines of Communication to Fifth and Sixth Graders by Gender
Among 427,000 Students Enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 in New York State
Winter 1989/90

	Total	Males	Females
	%	%	%
Perceive Parents' Disapproval of Children:			
Drinking Beer	63	61	64
Using Marijuana	75	73	78
Recent School Source for Drug or Alcohol Information:			
Health Class	40	41	38
Assembly Program	40	40	39
Drug Counselor	36	36	35
Preference for Help with Drug or Alcohol Problem:			
Parents	74	73	75
School Counselor	54	51	57
Friends	47	43	50
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS[a]	427,000	210,000	216,000

Example of How to Read the Table: Among girls, an estimated 64 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age drinking beer, and an estimated 78 percent report that their parents disapprove of children their age using marijuana.

[a]Due to rounding, numbers of males and females do not add exactly to the total.